

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Technical Committee

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**Date:** September 21, 2005

**File Number:** L050276 – 2005 Downtown Development Guide Update

**Recommended Action:** Amend the Redmond Community Development Guide to:

- Bring the Downtown zoning regulations and design standards into consistency with recently adopted updates to the Downtown Element of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan.
- Enhance and refine the development regulations and design standards to better address design issues in accordance with previously existing and newly adopted Comprehensive Plan policies.
- Improve the readability and clarity of the regulations and standards, particularly with respect to the intended concepts and ideas.

**Reasons the  
Proposal should be  
Adopted:**

The proposed amendment should be adopted because:

- The amendments are necessary to bring the Downtown Zoning regulations into consistency with the recently adopted



Comprehensive Plan update.

- The amendments are necessary to implement both the newly adopted Comprehensive Plan policies, and policies that existed prior to the last update.
- The amendments will help address design issues which need additional attention.
- The amendments will greatly assist Staff, the Design Review Board, developers and their designers in understanding the goals and expectations of the development regulations and design standards.
- The amendments are necessary to reduce impediments and disincentives to housing development in the Downtown.

## **I. APPLICANT PROPOSAL**

### **A. APPLICANT**

City of Redmond

### **B. REASON FOR PROPOSAL**

The purpose of these amendments is to make the development regulations and design guidelines for the Downtown (formerly City Center) neighborhood consistent with recently adopted amendments to the Downtown Element of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan, and to update these regulations and standards to address issues and/or changes in circumstances that have occurred since the last major update to these regulations and standards.

## **II. RECOMMENDATION**

The Technical Committee recommends amending the Community Development Guide as shown in Exhibit, A, B, C, and D. Below is a brief summary of the proposed amendments.

### **A. NAME/REFERENCE/MAP CHANGES**

1. The bulk of these amendments are required to address the recent change in the neighborhood name from “City Center” to “Downtown” in the Comprehensive



Plan; to coordinate the consolidation and addition of sub-districts within the Downtown neighborhood as adopted by the recent updates to the Comprehensive Plan; and to facilitate the elimination of the City Center Design Overlay Districts Map (Exhibit A, 20C.40.30-010), so that only one map (Downtown Districts Map, Exhibit A, 20C.40.20-015- new map) will be used to govern land use and development standards within the Downtown neighborhood. Using one map rather than two will make the Downtown standards easier to understand and apply.

2. With the changes in district names and boundaries, and the deletion of the Design Overlay Map, existing sections are proposed to be consolidated. For example Section 20C.40.30 is proposed to be consolidated into Section 20C.40.10-010 (Exhibit A); Section 20D.40.135 is proposed to be merged with Section 20D.40.130 (Exhibit B); and the Old Town design standards, Section 20D. 40.120, are proposed to be incorporated with Section 20C.40.150 (Exhibit B).
3. To address all other references to “City Center”, Exhibit D is provided to change all “City Center” or “CC” references to “Downtown” or “DT”, and change the Downtown zoning references from “CC-#s” to district names, such as “Old Town”.

## **B. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY UPDATE RELATED AMENDMENTS**

Following are examples of significant non-map related updates to implement recently adopted Comprehensive Plan policy amendments:

1. The Permitted Land Uses Chart, Section 20C.40.20-030, footnote 1b (Exhibit A) is proposed to be amended to allow greater land use flexibility per new Comprehensive Plan policy DT-65. With that, retail uses are proposed to be permitted in the East Hill, areas (formerly CC-6 zones) under certain conditions.
2. New design standards are proposed for uses/buildings along the BNSF right-of-way per new Comprehensive Plan policy DT-10, see proposed Section 20D.40.105 (Exhibit B).
3. New design standards are proposed for uses/buildings along the Downtown shorelines per new Comprehensive Plan policy DT-55, see proposed Section 20D.40.107 (Exhibit B).
4. New design standards are proposed for the Perrigo’s Plat sub-area of East Hill, per new Comprehensive Plan policy DT-68, see proposed Section 20D.40.145-030 (Exhibit B).



5. New design standards are proposed to encourage mixed-use village redevelopment of existing shopping centers, per new Comprehensive Plan policy DT-49, see proposed Section 20D.40.110-020(3) (Exhibit B) and footnote 10 (in the Maximum Building Heights row) of the Downtown Districts Site Requirements Chart, Section 20C.40.40-045 (Exhibit A).
6. Updates to development regulations are proposed to implement policy DT-2, which calls for supporting the Downtown as one of Redmond's primary locations for residential development.

### **C. OTHER UPDATES**

Below are brief descriptions of the more substantive changes recommended to the various development regulations and design standards. An all inclusive list of the amendments that are recommended is not included below as many of the changes proposed are made to improve readability and understandability, and are not considered to have significant affects on the intent of the existing regulation/standard.

1. Footnote 1 of the Permitted Land Uses Chart, Section 20C.40.20.030 (Exhibit A) is proposed to be amended in order to grant the vacant properties that were previously in the Valley View and Trestle districts (which allow single-story retail buildings) but are now located in the Town Square district (which does not allow single-story retail buildings) continued right to develop the properties with single-story retail buildings, if they desire. These property owners desire to retain the right to build single-story retail buildings if that is what their prospective tenants are requesting of them, especially because the majority of their shopping centers are occupied by single-story buildings, except for these minor vacant parcels. Representatives of these properties commented during the final review and adoption of the updated Downtown policies to express this interest.
2. Footnote 8 of the Permitted Land Uses Chart, Section 20C.40.20.030 (Exhibit A) is proposed to be amended to allow free-standing residential buildings on the quieter downtown streets, where having ground floor commercial spaces is not as critical. This may encourage the construction of more downtown housing, as ground floor commercial space will not be required on the proposed Type Va pedestrian streets. See also proposed Pedestrian System Map, Section 20C.40.105-020 (Exhibit A).
3. The Pedestrian System Map, Section 20C.40.105-020 (Exhibit A), is proposed to be amended to add a few more mid-block pedestrian connections (changing the symbol name from Type I – midblock to Type VIII. It is also proposed to be amended to reflect the recommendations of the Transportation Master Plan alignments for 158<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to Redmond Way, Bear Creek Parkway, 161<sup>st</sup> Avenue NE to Bear Creek Parkway, and 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to NE 76<sup>th</sup> Street.



4. Drive-through uses, in the Permitted Land Uses Chart, Section 20C.40.20.030 (Exhibit A) are proposed to be eliminated as Permitted and Special Uses in the Sammamish Trail, Town Square (formerly CC-4) and River Bend (formerly CC-5) districts. Because they are proposed to be removed from the former CC-4 and CC-5 zones, footnote 2 of the chart is also proposed to be amended to eliminate the minimum 3,000 square feet floor area requirement that applied to those zones.
5. Currently, building height in the Downtown districts is controlled by both the number of floors and feet. Maximum Building Height, in the Downtown Districts Site Requirements Chart, Section 20C.40.40-045 (Exhibit A) is proposed to be amended by eliminating “feet” as one of the two controlling factors of building height and thus recommends controlling building height by the number of floors, only. The allowed number of floors is not proposed to be changed. With that proposal, all references to “feet” as a controlling factor of height are proposed to be deleted from the chart. Eliminating “feet” as a controlling factor of height will encourage more creativity in building design, while not allowing additional floors (except through allowed bonuses and TDRs). Rooflines could be more modulated and varied from building to building. Additionally, footnote 9 is being amended to be less restrictive with rooftop appurtenances such as mechanical equipment and screening – as it is in all other zones of the City; foot 9a is recommended to allow on-site transfer of building height in consideration for reducing the building height at the edges; footnote 9b is recommended to expressly state that only one additional floor of additional height can be achieved through the use of Transfer Development Rights.
6. Maximum Floor Area Ratio and Height without Transfer Development Rights (TDRs), Section 20C.40.40-040 (Exhibit A) is recommended to be amended to provide more clarity about the use and requirements of TDRs. Additionally, in conjunction with amendments to the Downtown Residential Densities Chart, as discussed below, TDRs are recommended to be eliminated as a requirement for residential floor area, as this additional cost is a disincentive to downtown housing development.
7. Downtown Residential Densities Chart, Section 20C.40.45-020 (Exhibit A), is recommended to be amended to simplify its understanding by eliminating the required use of Transfer Development Rights to gain additional residential density. As the bulk and height of the allowed buildings are already regulated by height and setback requirements (regulating building envelope), it is recommended that residential developments be allowed to achieve as many units as they desire within the allowed building envelope as long as they can provide all of the required private/common space and parking that is required for each dwelling unit and meet other City development standards such as those related to utilities and transportation.



8. Residential Usable Open Space, Section 20C.40.60 (Exhibit A), is recommended to be amended to: provide an upper limit on the amount of common open space that will be required – limiting the requirement to be not more than 20% of the site area; provide an exemption from common open space requirements for townhouse units that have at least 200 square feet of private open space; create an in-lieu fee system that provides developers the option of paying into a Downtown parks fund when some of the common and private open spaces are not feasible to provide on-site.
9. Ground Floor Residential Uses, Section 20C.40.78 (Exhibit A), is recommended to be added to provide additional residential development opportunities on Downtown streets where ground floor commercial space is not essential to the long term success of achieving the vision for the neighborhood. In conjunction with that, additional design standards are proposed in Section 20D.40.115-020 (1)(f), shown in Exhibit B.
10. Residential Parking and Access, Section 20C.40.85 (Exhibit A), is recommended to be amended to: expressly state that required parking may be provided off-site; require a higher standard for architectural finishes of parking structures; and expressly state that parking garages may be placed on an alley property line under circumstances.
11. The Minimum Setback in a Transition Overlay, Section 20C.40.40-050 (Exhibit A) is recommended to be deleted as there are so few areas that are truly affected by this regulation, and because this regulation is found to be unnecessary for transitions between downtown uses and the nearby Multi-Family Residential zones.
12. The Parking Spaces for Specific Land Uses chart, Section 20D.130.10-020(1), shown in Exhibit D, is recommended to be amended to: expressly state that the maximum on-site parking ratio can be exceeded when the excess parking stalls are also made available to the general public (footnote 2); exempt small home office uses from providing required parking (footnote 3); and to state that curbside parking along the site may be counted for up to 25% of the required parking spaces (including required guest parking stalls).
13. The standard for allowing cooperative/shared parking, Section 20D.130.10-040 (Exhibit D) is recommended to be amended to require enough parking stalls to satisfy the average-daily peak demand generated by the uses sharing the parking facility at one time, provided the total number of stalls is not less than 60 percent of the required stalls for each of the uses combined.



### **III. ALTERNATIVES**

#### **A. ISSUES CONSIDERED AND ALTERNATIVES**

##### **Primary Issues Considered**

The primary issues considered in this amendment packet are:

- Implementing necessary changes to bring the zoning regulations and design standards into consistency with the recently adopted updates to the Downtown Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Such issues include revising zoning maps and associated land use and development standard charts to conform with new boundaries adopted through the Comprehensive Plan; establishing design standards for the Perrigo's Plat sub-area of East Hill; and establishing new standards and guidelines to encourage mixed-use village style redevelopment of existing single-story Downtown shopping centers, for example.
- Reducing impediments to residential development in the Downtown neighborhood, while also encouraging high quality and attractive design. The issues being considered regarding Downtown housing include eliminating requirements for Transfer Development Rights, allowing curb side parking to be counted toward off-street parking requirements, and allow free-standing residential buildings (not requiring ground floor commercial space) in more areas of the Downtown.
- Design issues being considered include the exterior architectural treatment of building facades visible from streets, the design and placement of ground floor residential spaces on moderately busy collector streets, and treatment of storefront windows. Building height, as a design issue, is being considered as the proposal recommends that instead of regulating height with a combination of a maximum number of floors AND a height measured in feet, that only a maximum number of floors be used in order to provide flexibility in architectural design, without allow additional floors.

##### **Alternatives**

The recommendations being proposed are considered to be either amendments that are necessary to implement the updated Comprehensive Plan policies for Downtown, and/or minor amendments to existing regulations and standards to address minor issues and concerns such as improving readability/understandability, and making improvements to the existing regulations and standards.

With exception to the amendments that will bring the zoning and design standards into consistency with the recently adopted updates to the Comprehensive Plan, the alternatives include: keep the regulations as is or modify the proposed amendments. Staff recommends that further evaluation of alternatives be considered as needed for major



issues identified by the Planning Commission following its review of the Technical Committee's recommendation.

## **B. COMPARISON WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES, APPROACHES**

In preparing to make the recommendations included in this amendment packet, Staff visited other cities, discussed issues with other Planning professionals, and compared how other jurisdictions address the types of issues and goals they have in common with Redmond, and Staff has concluded that with the exception of the amendments necessary to affect the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan policies, only minor revisions to the existing regulations and standards are necessary to continue to shape and form Downtown Redmond according to the adopted vision for Downtown.

## **IV. SUPPORTING ANALYSIS: FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **A. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

In August of 2004, the City Council adopted major updates to the Downtown Element of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan which included: land use district boundary changes; revisions/deletions to existing Downtown policies; and the creation of new Downtown policies. Since then, Staff has been working to draft amendments to the existing Development Guide Regulations and Design Standards in order to make them consistent with the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan maps and policies for Downtown.

Prior to the Comprehensive Plan amendments mentioned above, significant revisions to the Downtown Regulations and Design Standards have not been made since December 1999 (Ordinance 2051), when updates were made to address the annual Comprehensive Plan Update for that year. With that said, the Planning Staff and the Technical Committee are taking this opportunity to not only update the regulations and design guidelines to correspond to the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan amendment, but to also address issues that have arisen since the last major update to the existing regulations and design standards for the Downtown neighborhood.

### **B. COMPLIANCE WITH CRITERIA FOR AMENDMENTS**

Redmond Comprehensive Plan Policies PI-16, LU-24 and LU-9 direct the City to take several considerations, as applicable, into account as part of decisions on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Community Development Guide.



Items 1 through 6 apply to all proposed amendments. Items 7 through 10 apply when proposed amendments concern allowed land uses or densities, such as proposed amendments to the Land Use Plan Map, land use designations, allowed land uses, or zoning map.

The following is an analysis of how this proposal complies with the requirements for amendments.

**1. Consistency with Growth Management Act (GMA), State of Washington Department of Community Trade and Economic Development Procedural Criteria, VISION 2020 or its successor, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies.**

The Growth Management Act urban growth goal, in RCW 36.70A.020(1), encourages development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be efficiently provided. The GMA's second goal calls for reducing the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development. The fourth goal of the GMA is to encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of the state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types. The existing Downtown Element meets these goals. The purpose of the proposed amendments is to bring the zoning regulations and design standards into consistency with the recent updates to the Comprehensive Plan and to revise the zoning and development regulations to better achieve the existing and updated goals. Specifically, revising zoning boundaries to encourage higher density mixed-use development where there is currently low density convenience commercial uses will allow for a more compact and walkable development pattern in the designated urban core.

**2. Consistency with Redmond's Comprehensive Plan, including the following sections as applicable:**

- a. Consistency with the goals contained in the Goals, Vision and Framework Policy Element.**
- b. Consistency with the preferred land use pattern as described in the Land Use Element,**
- c. Consistency with Redmond's community character objectives as described in the Community Character/Historic Preservation Element or elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan.**



The proposed amendments are designed to bring the Downtown regulations and design standards into consistency with the recently adopted updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

**3. Potential general impacts to the natural environment, such as impacts to critical areas and other natural resources.**

Most all of the land within the Downtown has been developed or prepared for development with the provision of streets and basic utilities, although additional utility and street improvements will be required to serve new developments. The prevalent critical areas within the neighborhood are the shorelines along Bear Creek and the Sammamish River, and the aquifer recharge area that lies under most of the neighborhood. The City's existing critical areas, shoreline, and wellhead protection regulations provide adequate protection of these sensitive areas and guidance for development within the sensitive area jurisdictions. The proposed amendments are intended in part to encourage more efficient use of existing developed areas and should not increase the amount of impervious surface in the Downtown, or negatively impact critical areas.

**4. Potential general impacts to the capacity of public facilities and services. For land use related amendments, whether public facilities and services can be provided cost-effectively and adequately at the proposed density/intensity.**

The proposed amendments will increase needs for public facilities as more potential housing/office development opportunities will be encouraged. The recently adopted Comprehensive Plan amendment set the policy direction for an increase in Downtown development capacity in two primary ways. First, the updates reduced the size of the lower density Trestle and Valley View districts by including more property in the mid-rise, mixed use residential/office districts. Second, the Downtown policies provide for consideration of allowing an additional story (bringing the maximum possible to 4 floors) in the convenience commercial districts provided redevelopment is in an urban village form and meets other provisions, such as that adequate transportation and public facilities can be provided. Staff estimates that these two changes could allow three to four million more square feet of residential or office space to be added over time. The proposed regulatory amendments will implement the adopted policy updates.

Improvements are needed to the Downtown water and sewer utilities in order to accommodate the amount of development that is currently allowed. The proposed amendment will increase that need more. The City is currently working on an update to the 1997 General Sewer Plan to identify needed improvements throughout the community and estimated cost. A major issue for City Council discussion and direction will be how needed utility improvements should be financed. Carrying out the policies for the Downtown is very important to achieving many of the City's



goals, including those related to housing, economic vitality, transportation, and diverse cultural opportunities so establishing a strategy for funding needed improvements will be critically important.

The future land use estimates for the Sewer Master Plan reflect the additional Downtown development capacity as intended by the Downtown policies. The Transportation Master Plan was based primarily on the City's expected growth through 2022 though it also includes a build-out facilities plan in anticipation of long-range development potential in the City.

**5. Potential general economic impacts, such as impacts for business, residents, property owners, or City Government.**

Potential economic impacts may arise over the years as areas that were previously planned for and zoned to allow single-story shopping center type development (which includes drive-through uses such as fast food restaurants, automobile lube-and-tune businesses, car washes, drive-up banks and pharmacies, and drive-through coffee houses) will be reduced in area by the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan amendment and the proposed zoning boundary changes recommended to bring the zoning into consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Some existing and future businesses may be displaced over time as redevelopment occurs in these areas. The businesses in place at the time of redevelopment may continue as part of the new development or their leases may lapse due to decisions on the part of the businesses or property owners. New businesses and or housing may replace some existing businesses over time. None of the impacts are foreseen to be detrimental to the City at this time.

**6. For issues that have been considered within the last four annual updates or comprehensive land use plan amendments, whether there has been a change in circumstances that makes the proposed plan designation or policy change appropriate or whether the amendment is needed to remedy a mistake.**

The amendments are not proposed to remedy any mistakes. These amendments are proposed to correspond with the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan updates in order to bringing the zoning and development standards into consistency the updated Comprehensive Plan.

**The following items apply when proposed amendments concern allowed land uses or densities, such as proposed amendments to the Land Use Plan Map, land use designations, allowed land uses, or zoning map.**

**7. General suitability of the area for the proposed land use or density, taking into account considerations such as adjacent land uses and the surrounding**



**development pattern, and the zoning standards under the potential zoning classifications.**

The amendments are aimed at ensuring greater long-term compatibility between existing and future uses. The proposed amendments relating to land use are relatively minor in nature. The existing Downtown zoning allows urban scaled density and intensity, according to the existing vision and goals for Downtown. The proposed amendments are intended to refine the zoning to correspond to the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan updates for the neighborhood, which continue to designate the Downtown neighborhood as an urban center.

**8. Whether the proposed land use designation, zoning, or uses are compatible with nearby land use designations, zoning or uses. Whether there are opportunities to achieve compatibility with surrounding land uses through design or through separation by topography or buffers.**

The proposed zoning designations are compatible with the nearby zoning designations adjoining the Downtown neighborhood. The proposed amendments relating to land use are relatively minor in nature. The adjoining zones generally allow multi-family or commercial development with building heights that are not much less than allowed in the Downtown neighborhood. The proposed amendments are intended to refine the zoning to correspond to the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan updates for the neighborhood which continue to designate the Downtown neighborhood as an urban center. No significant changes are proposed that are foreseen to cause greater incompatibility between the Downtown uses and other adjoining zones.

**9. Whether development will be directed away from environmentally critical areas and other important natural resources.**

The proposed amendments are not intended to allow development that is not consistent with existing critical areas regulations. The proposed amendments do not change the currently allowed proximity of development to critical areas. New standards that are consistent with existing critical areas regulations are proposed for uses that are near critical areas.

**10. If the amendment proposes a change in allowed uses or densities in an area:**

- a. The need and demand for the land uses that would be allowed and whether the change would result in the loss of capacity to accommodate other needed land uses, especially whether the proposed amendment complies with policy HO-16, the City's policy of no-net loss of housing capacity;**



The amendments are consistent with HO-16. None of the amendments are foreseen to reduce existing or future housing capacity. However, an amendment to allow retail uses in the East Hill area of Downtown (described in section B.1 of this report), where it is currently not allowed, might have a dampening affect on desired housing production in the near- and mid-term, as the existing single-family homes may be converted to retail uses, as well as services uses, instead of the properties being combined and redeveloped with additional housing units as ultimately envisioned. This amendment is recommended to affect the recently adopted policy, DT-65, of the Downtown Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

**b. Implications of the proposed amendment for the balance between the amount and type of employment in Redmond and the amount and type of housing in Redmond.**

The proposed amendments are intended to better address the housing needs in Redmond. Many of the amendments are designed to encourage the production of more Downtown housing units.

**C. RELATIONSHIP TO PENDING AMENDMENTS IN THE 2005-06 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PACKAGE**

This subject amendment is most closely related to a pending Comprehensive Plan amendment that could result from high capacity transit (HCT) planning for the Downtown and SE Redmond. Staff does not anticipate that the proposed Downtown Development Guide amendment would conflict with amendments that may be considered related to HCT planning. While other proposed or requested Comprehensive Plan amendments may involve issues related to the Downtown they are likely to be at a policy level rather than a regulatory level.

**V. AUTHORITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL, PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW**

**A. Subject Matter Jurisdiction**

The Redmond Planning Commission and the Redmond City Council have subject matter jurisdiction to hear and decide whether to adopt the proposed Development Guide Amendment.

**B. Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)**

A Determination of Non-Significance and SEPA Checklist were issued for this non-project action on August 4, 2005.



**C. 60-Day State Agency Review**

State agencies were sent 60-day notice of this proposed amendment on August 3, 2005.

**D. Public Involvement**

The public has opportunities to comment on the proposed amendment through the Planning Commission review process and public hearing. The proposed amendment will be accessible through the City's web site and copies will also be available at City Hall. In addition, Staff is scheduled to brief the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce on the proposed amendment in late September.

**E. Appeals**

RCDG 20F.30.55 identifies Development Guide Amendments as a Type VI permit. Final action is held by the City Council. The action of the City Council on a Type VI proposal may be appealed by filing a petition with the Growth Management Hearing Board pursuant to the requirements

**VI. LIST OF EXHIBITS**

**Exhibit A: Proposed Amendment to Section 20C.40 – City Center**

**Exhibit B: Proposed Amendments to Section 20D.40 - Design Standards**

**Exhibit C: Proposed Amendments to Section 20D.130 – Parking Regulations**

**Exhibit D: Proposed Amendments to Various City Center References**

**Exhibit E: Threshold Determination and SEPA Checklist**

<u>/s/</u>	<u>9/15/05</u>
Roberta Lewandowski, Planning Director	Date

<u>/s/</u>	<u>9/15/05</u>
Dave Rhodes, Public Works Director	Date